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Associate Editors: Rev. F. J. O'Sullivan, R. F. Mackintosh.

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LONDON, SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 1916

ALL THINGS WHATSOEVER I HAVE COMMANDED YOU

The Country Church Work Board of the Presbyterian Church in the United States after an exhaustive survey of the whole country has issued a Report which makes interesting reading.

The investigators, after a survey of 1,515 churches in nineteen counties of Ohio, report as follows:

"Of these 1,515 churches slightly less than one-third are growing. The others have ceased to grow or are dying. There are something like 800 in the entire State whose doors and windows have been nailed shut and they will never be used again for religious purposes."

Ohio is not an exceptional instance but indicative of rural conditions everywhere. Herman N. Morse, the investigator who made the Lane County, Oregon, survey, says: "It is not necessary to recommend measures for reducing the number of small churches. They will die of themselves. The people of Oregon are practical, and prompt is the demise of the useless church."

One might imagine that the picture is dismal and disheartening; but we are told that the workers of the Country Church Board are not at all pessimistic about the future. "On the contrary, they are as hopeful a group to talk with as you could find."

"Most of the churches which are dying ought to die," asserts the Rev. Matthew Brown McNutt, a member of the Board. "There is nothing new about these evils. We are simply discovering them and applying the remedies. We are training a new type of minister who will go to the new type of country church, not as a stepping-stone to something in town, but as to an institution that in itself offers a big career; a place in which to accomplish big things, by being a community leader and a real minister to all the interests of the people."

Just what is meant by being "a minister to all the interests of the people" is indicated in the following extract from an article in the N. Y. Times Magazine which sympathetically sums up the conclusions of the investigating Board and outlines its optimistic plans for the regeneration of the rural church:

"For the sake of a generalization, these investigators have found that the decadence of the country church, the dwindling of its community influence to the vanishing point and the falling off of membership have been due not to the farmers, but to the church itself and its failure to keep up with the material welfare of a community sufficiently to give it any right whatever to expect the privilege of any spiritual leadership."

"More specifically the trouble has been largely upon work in a country church as a necessary bit of preliminary drudgery, an uninteresting, low-pay period of apprenticeship at soul-saving that had to be got through with before any pulpits fledgling could expect a call to a bigger town with a bigger salary."

"Why should he bother his head with problems of cultivating grain fields and the domestic economy puzzles of the farmers' wives and daughters when, in a year or so, he would be transferred to the paved town to preach to men who wear collars seven days a week and to take tea with the ladies who think they are interested in Browning and Ibsen? It was so pleasant to dream of the time that he would thunder fearlessly from the pulpit against robbery in high places and see it all in the newspaper the next morning that it never occurred to him to thunder from the country pulpit against the iniquity of robbing the land every season by taking off the crop and not putting in the fertilizer."

"Religion itself, says the Country Church Board, is neither an unknown nor an unwelcome thing to the

farmer. But he must have it in the terms of the twentieth century and in the terms of country life. The church as administered fifty years ago does not yield anything which the farmer will value as he does the aid and sympathy he is getting from his Federal Government, through the Department of Agriculture, through the Department of Agriculture, or from his State experiment station, or from any of several other betterment agencies that have outdistanced the parson in getting to the man on the plowed ground."

In all this optimistic picture of the future "community church" we see nothing in which Jews, Mormons and Mohammedans might not unreservedly cooperate. Promotion of "the material welfare of the community" is a highly commendable object in its place. But what has it to do with soul-saving Gospel of Jesus Christ? Materialism naked and unashamed in the Christian pulpit and in Christ's name devalues Christ's gospel and degrades His service into the very worship of Mammon.

It is written: "No man can serve two masters. For either he will hate the one, and love the other; or he will sustain the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and Mammon." "Be not solicitous, therefore, saying, What shall we eat; or what shall we drink, or where-with shall we be clothed? For after all these things do the heathens seek. For your Father knoweth you have need of all these things."

It is no cause for rejoicing to Catholics that decadent Protestantism is losing all semblance of spirituality and is trying to concentrate all its activities on materialistic utilitarianism. While it retained definite Christian truths it had some spiritual force and influence. As a competitor or collaborator of the Department of Agriculture and the State experiment stations it may do something for the material welfare of agricultural communities; but farmers may be honest enough to object to the hypocrisy of a farmers' club or an agricultural society masquerading as a Christian church.

The Country Church Board assures us that the farmer is religious. Yes, and when he goes to church on Sunday the Christian farmer wishes to hear something that lifts him out of the material things in which he has been immersed all week; something that makes him realize that there are higher and better things than those which he seeks in common with the heathen; something of that Life of which our Lord in season and out of season emphasized the transcendent importance. All week the tillers of the soil have labored for the meat which perisheth, on Sunday they expect that which endureth unto life everlasting. And "in the terms of the twentieth century and in the terms of country life" he hears one who professes to bring the healing message of the Saviour of the world "thunder from his country pulpit against the iniquity of robbing the land every season by taking off the crop and not putting in the fertilizer"

Even the helpful domestic economy suggestions to the farmers' wives and daughters must leave them pretty much on a week-day level in spite of the "uplifting" efforts of the up-to-date minister of the gospel.

The Country Church Board's ambitious scheme of the reorganization and regeneration of the rural church is doomed to the failure it deserves. The salt has lost its savor; and we fear the investigator of Oregon conditions has anticipated the general verdict in his unconscious prophecy: "The people of Oregon (and elsewhere) are practical, and prompt is the demise of a useless Church."

WHY IRELAND IS OPPOSED TO CONSCRIPTION

An esteemed correspondent wishes to know "why the Irish people are so bitterly opposed to conscription."

To understand Irish politics one must know Irish history. An English statesman has written:

"Politics are vulgar when they are not liberalized by history, and history fades into mere literature when it loses sight of its relation to practical politics."

Not to go back into the long centuries of diabolical tyranny compared with which present day German atrocities in Belgium are but mild measures of benevolent rulers, we may glance at a few of the events of more recent history.

As the price of the Union Catholics were promised emancipation; that promise was shamelessly broken. Twenty-eight years later—not generously nor magnanimously, not even in a spirit of tardy justice, but grudgingly, in a mean and craven

spirit to avoid civil war—Catholic Emancipation was passed.

"Ireland was now on the verge of revolution," says Lecky, "and the Ministers, feeling further resistance to be hopeless, brought in the Emancipation Bill, confessedly because to withhold it would be to kindle a rebellion over the length and breadth of the land."

But the franchise of the 40 s freeholder was taken away from Irish men, though it remained the qualification in England; it was not until 1884 that the English franchise was extended to Ireland. That with regard to Emancipation, the English Government were as dishonest as they were mean-spirited, how they rendered this belated act of justice nugatory is thus told by Lecky:

"In 1833—four years after Catholic Emancipation—there was not in Ireland a single Catholic judge or stipendiary magistrate. All the high sheriffs, with one exception, the overwhelming majority of unpaid magistrates, and of the grand jurors, the four inspectors-general, and the thirty-two sub-inspectors of police, were Protestant. The chief towns were in the hands of narrow, corrupt, and, for the most part, intensely bigoted corporations."

We must pass over the interesting and illuminating story of the Established Church of Ireland. "The conscience of England," said Lord Dufferin in the House of Lords, "was much stimulated, if not altogether awakened to this question, by the fact of Fenianism." Consequently the Irish Church was disestablished in 1869.

The Land War and Home Rule agitation are too recent to need more than a reference here. But all through the piece what Lord John Russell, reviewing the history of Ireland down to his time, said remained true:

"Your oppressions have taught the Irish to hate you, your concessions to brave you. You have exhibited to them how scanty was the stream of your bounty, and how full the tribute of your fear."

And all through the history of Ireland down to the present hour—though considerably mitigated in recent years—you have the outstanding fact, unparalleled in the civilized world, of an overwhelming majority oppressed by an insignificant minority. Why? simply because behind the minority in Ireland is the immense power of a foreign country.

And the upholders of Protestant Ascendancy in Ireland glory in the fact that they are the champions of civil and religious liberty!

"I do not believe," said Mr. Joseph Chamberlain in 1885, "that the great majority of Englishmen have the slightest conception of the system under which this free nation attempts to rule the sister country. It is a system which is founded on the bayonets of 30,000 soldiers encamped permanently as in a hostile country. It is a system as completely centralized and bureaucratic as that with which Russia governs Poland or as that which prevailed in Venice under Austrian rule. An Irishman at this moment cannot move a step—he cannot lift a finger in any parochial, municipal or educational work without being confronted with, interfered with, controlled by, an English official, appointed by a foreign Government."

One step has been made since then—a measure of municipal self-government has been obtained.

This hurried and very incomplete review of historical causes of present conditions in Ireland is all that space permits. If our correspondent would understand Ireland he must read Irish history.

That the spirit of the foreign government of Ireland is the same today as it has been for a century past is amply shown in Redmond's great speech, which we publish elsewhere in this issue.

Ireland sympathetic, Ireland enthusiastic for the war, was insulted and thwarted by what Lloyd George admitted were the "stupidities at times having the appearance of malignance" of an alien government.

This is a war for the rights of small nations, a war for liberty and democracy. Ireland is denied her national rights and is governed by a bureaucracy. Forty-five Boards, not one of which is responsible to the Irish people, take the place of democratic self-government.

And now martial law follows the bloody execution of the misguided leaders of an insane rebellion. Boer rebels are treated as the civilized world has long treated political prisoners: Irish rebels with the savagery of a bygone age. Could

the bad old Ascendancy spirit find a better—or worse—expression than in the murders of Sheehy-Skeffington and others? Or in the shielding of the murderer, —Bowen-Colthurst? In the fact that all mention of Irish regiments was deliberately suppressed in official despatches? In the deliberate policy of the Ascendancy recruiting committee? (See Redmond's speech.) In the thousand and one ways in which Irish sentiment and Irish sense of justice have been outraged? And it is the old Ascendancy party alone who dare to talk of conscription in Ireland.

When the American colonies resented and resisted taxation without representation, the great English statesman Pitt, in the House of Commons, said:

"In my opinion this Kingdom has no right to levy a tax on the colonies. America is obstinate! America is almost in open rebellion! Sir, I rejoice that America has resisted. Three millions of people so dead to all the feelings of liberty as voluntarily to submit to be slaves would have been fit instruments to make slaves of the rest."

Changing what should be changed it is a poor sort of Irishman—or for that matter a poor sort of Englishman—who would not find in Pitt's words the expression of his own indignant resentment of the proposal to extend conscription to Ireland in present circumstances.

It's England's move.

THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

After an election campaign where the only outstanding issue was embodied in the slogan—"Wilson kept us out of War"—the people of the United States have decided that, regardless of all other considerations, President Wilson rightly interpreted their will.

Again and again we have been told that Germany was on the eve of resuming ruthless submarine warfare. President Wilson's reelection assures Germany that nothing she may do will involve war with the United States. That deterrent possibility removed should greatly strengthen the hands of the Von Tirpitz faction which favors unlimited submarine activity.

If the presidential election means anything it means that the American people desires its president to keep it out of war at all costs.

Wilson's future notes, no matter how phrased, are, therefore, foredoomed to even greater feebleness and futility than ever before. The greatest peril Germany has to fear from the United States is the breaking off of diplomatic relations.

In view of the noisy claim on all sides during the campaign that Hughes was the pro German favorite, the fact is remarkable that the German-American vote was about evenly divided. Is it possible that the Germans desired to damn Hughes by creating the impression that he was their candidate? In any case it is difficult to see how Germany can be dissatisfied with the result.

THE WINTER EVENING

Now that "the frost is on the pumpkin and the corn is in the shock" our parish societies will naturally be giving thought to the preparation of their programme for the coming winter. This is a very important consideration, for, as an experienced authority has recently pointed out, the manner in which we spend our leisure time has a greater influence upon the formation of our character than even our daily occupations. Of course, the social features will be given prominence. No fault can be found with that; for there is need of stimulating social intercourse among our Catholic people. Strangers often complain of the difficulty of getting acquainted with their Catholic neighbors. It is quite a common thing now-a-days to hear people give as an excuse for not going to Mass that the priest or the Catholics of the place had not called upon them. Such persons have certainly not a very lively faith in the Real Presence when they have not called at God's house. But apart from the consideration of such cases, there is need in every parish of some hall or clubroom where the people may meet socially, and where there can be an interchange of opinion between priest and people relative to the well-being of the parish.

Now that dancing under church auspices has been vetoed on account of the abuses that were associated with it in many places, the progressive eucure party bids fair to become

more popular. It is a legitimate means of recreation, and affords opportunity of introducing strangers and even of bringing about acquaintance between long-standing members of the parish, who, although they had met under the same roof Sunday after Sunday, did not know each other's names. Apropos of this subject we would suggest that no one sit down at a table unless he or she know how to play the game or desires to learn. By violating this rule parties make themselves very unpopular and produce a situation that approaches close to inanity.

The refreshment feature of these evenings is to our mind very much overdue. Why cannot people spend a few hours together without eating, something that the majority of them would not do if they were at home. As we laid awake at night after partaking of strong coffee and angel cake—not because we wanted it but lest we should give offense—we tried to solve this conundrum. The conclusion we came to was that the situation was due to the enthusiasm of the ladies to do their part. They might have had misgivings, not due to any lack of ability on their part but rather to abnormal self-consciousness, as to how they would succeed with an essay or recitation. But there was one thing they knew that they could do; they could cook—hinc illi dolores. We know of at least one Reading Circle that started out with high aims and aspirations and that came to grief just through this mistaken idea of hospitality on the part of the ladies.

It were a waste of type to insist that the literary part of these programmes should have the foremost place. Even those who prefer the social game and the lunch will admit this. We might confer a greater service therefore if, instead of urging this point, we suggested a course of study for one season. Many series might be proposed but here is one on Canadian history that might prove acceptable: Champlain, or the Founding of Quebec; Laval, or the Birth of the Church in Canada; Heroines of New France, including papers on Sister Mary of the Incarnation, Marguerite Bourgeoys and Mlle. Mance; The Ancient Diocese of Quebec, with reference to the discovery of Marquette and Joliet, La Salle and Hennepin; The First Mass in Upper Canada, or The History of the Recollet Fathers: Brebeuf and Lalemant; The Heroes of the Long Sault, describing the dangers encountered by the early settlers from Indian massacres; The Dispersion of the Acadians; The Treaty of Paris; Mgr. McDonald, first Bishop of Upper Canada; The Family Compact and The Durham Report; The British North America Act, the Magna Charta of our Canadian liberties.

This is but a tentative programme but the subjects are selected so as to reveal the part played by the Church in our country's history. We hear much nowadays of patriotism. True patriotism presupposes knowledge; for a person cannot be proud of or loyal to an institution of whose history he knows little or nothing. There are no people who have such good reason to be loyal as Canadian Catholics, because of the role that has been played by their forebears in the making of Canada. The consideration of a single period of history has this advantage, that the members accomplish something definite which is not always the case when the subjects are selected promiscuously. In the latter instance it not unfrequently happens that there is trumped up some old composition that has already done service and is of doubtful interest to the hearers and of no benefit to the writer; for the value of an essay is in exact proportion to the amount of labor spent in its production.

THE GLEANER.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

RESUMING the subject of last week's Notes and Comments. There is a strong impression among the Western nations that Russia is a country of vast, but almost entirely undeveloped resources. This is true in a measure only. Her principal drawback in the past has been the lack of railways and other modern transportation facilities, and if the War may prove in the event to have done nothing else for Russia, it will at least have inaugurated an era of railway building which must, no less than on the American continent, go far to terminate the position of isolation from other nations in which she has lain so long.

THE FIRST step in the development of a country along any particular line is the realization on the part of its inhabitants of the need of that development. In this the Russian nation has been no exception to the general rule. Even prior to the war the era of railway construction had begun. The building of the great Trans-Siberian Line—the longest continuous railway line in the world,—had opened the eyes of the people to the necessity of providing similar facilities to other and more remote parts of the country. The situation then was similar to that which prevailed in the Prairie Provinces of Canada before the construction of branch railway lines brought about the full development of their agricultural resources. In Siberia, the most important section of the country agriculturally, the agriculturist had to contend with great difficulties in his effort to dispose of his produce to advantage. The chief of these difficulties was his great distance from export markets, and the problem of transporting it thither. The Trans-Siberian Railway taught him how this obstacle was to be overcome. As a result several other lines soon sprang into existence.

THE RAILWAY from Tiumen to Omsk was first constructed, thus providing an alternative route between European Russia and the Irish river. The double-tracking of the Trans-Siberian railway itself was undertaken, and has been completed from Omsk to the junction of the Amur Railway. With the construction of the latter there are now two lines of rail from the Ural mountains to the Pacific, and with the opening to traffic during the present year of three new and important lines, the era of construction may safely be said to have entered upon. What that means to Russia, a glance at the last half-century of American and Canadian history will serve to demonstrate.

OF THE VASTNESS of the territory called Siberia, which is after all but a portion of the Russian Empire, very few people on this continent have an adequate idea. Take a world-map and compare the size of the two Americas with Asia, East and West, noting that Russia spans its full extent, and takes in half of Europe besides. Of this vast extent Siberia is but a portion, and Siberia itself is divided into East and West. Western Siberia is the most important section of the region, and has 9,000,000 out of the total 11,500,000 population of all Siberia. These 9,000,000 of people are settled on the plains of Western Siberia and in the foothills of the Altai. These plains stretch across the continent for 1,200 miles without a break to the Altai mountains, and are watered by the great rivers—the Obi, the Irtysh and the Yenisei—which flow in a northerly and southerly direction to the Arctic ocean. The prevailing idea on many sides is that this country is but a vast, desolate waste, and that those who inhabit it are in a scarcely less unenviable situation than the Esquimaux within the Polar Circle. How far this is from the truth a few facts will suffice to show.

AT THE risk of being considered as re-writing geography we proceed to give a few details of this little known land. The Altai mountains cross Siberia from southwest to northeast, forming the northwest edge of the Great Central Asiatic tableland. In the north the plains of Western Siberia are covered with a forest belt, rich in unexploited timber, and in far-bearing animals, but much of which consists of impassable marshes. It has been said that if, in the now inconceivable possibility of a Teutonic triumph in the present War, the German armies attempted an invasion of Russia, the Russian armies would but fall back, and fall back even into these remote Siberian recesses where any army, however

formidably equipped in munitions and supplies, that attempted to follow them would be swallowed up and lost or annihilated. Napoleon had his experience in European Russia, which, compared with the country described, is not much more than like a Province of Canada. It may well be, then, that the German War lords have in the present stage of the conflict looked aghast at the map of the Russian Empire.

SOUTH OF THE Siberian forest zone described there extends between latitudes 55 and 57 the Black Earth region, the section most attractive for agricultural colonization. Into

this region for the ten years preceding the outbreak of hostilities people from European Russia were pouring in at a rate of 300,000 annually. This great influx of people naturally tended to enhance the growth of the riches of the country from year to year. The result was, as pointed out by an acute economical observer, that the surplus of agricultural products available for distribution on the export and European Russian markets greatly increased and before the war had already attained large dimensions. This fact points conclusively to the destiny of Russia as perhaps the greatest food-supplying domain in the world. It has been estimated that the black-earth zone of Western Siberia alone is, if properly cultivated, capable of supporting five times the present population of Russia.

MUCH MORE might be said on this subject did space permit, and we have yet to survey, in the perhaps superficial manner the columns of a weekly journal permit, the possibilities lying dormant in the inexhaustible forests of Asiatic Russia. Here alone the world is assured of an adequate supply of timber for centuries to come, and Russia of means of development which to the mind of man is difficult to adequately conceive.

ON THE BATTLE LINE

THE NAVY

The British navy is tackling with vigor the renewed submarine attacks of Germany in the North Sea and English Channel. It is asserted that a number of the enemy's submarines passed through the Straits of Dover during the recent destroyer raid on the British coast. The transport service and are operating off the south coast of England. The assumption that the submarines in question have their bases at Ostend and Zeebrugge is strengthened by an official report issued last night stating that British seaplanes yesterday attacked the submarine shelters at these Belgian ports and dropped a great weight in bombs upon them and on the harbor works with satisfactory results. The heavy loss of Allied shipping continues.

ON RUSSIAN FRONT

The Germans have scored a win in the Stokhod region of Volhynia, where Petrograd admits that after repelling seven onslaughts the Russian troops were compelled to fall back to their second line. Berlin locates the scene of the battle on the Skrobowa Creek, and states that the Russians were driven back along a front of two and a half miles, suffering sanguinary losses and leaving behind them as prisoners 49 officers and 3,880 men. This is the most considerable victory for the enemy reported on the centre front for several weeks.

DANGEROUS GERMAN PROGRESS

In the Transylvanian Alps, and northward along the Carpathians as far as the border of Bukowina, fighting of the fiercest sort continues at many points. Berlin claims progress south of the Red Tower and Predal Passes. The point at which the advance has been made in the latter gorge is "west of Azuga," where 188 prisoners and four machine guns were taken. The statement that the gain made was "west" of Azuga indicates how slight the German advance has been during the past month on this vital portion of the front. Azuga is but eight miles south of the border. A more serious reverse is reported by Petrograd from the Buzeu Valley, which lies about twenty miles east of the Predal. There the Germans stormed the Roumanian positions and pushed them back to the south almost three miles. Finding the Predal defences too hard a nut to crack, von Falkenhayne may be trying to turn them by an advance in force southward through the Buzeu Valley toward Ploesti and thence to Bucharest. A drive in this direction would cut the chief railway connecting Bucharest with Moldavia and Russia.—Globe, Nov. 11.

CERNAVODA BRIDGE

London, Nov. 10.—To-day's Russian official report on the fighting in the Dobrudja region of Roumania contains one of the most startling messages of the war.

"Our cavalry and infantry detachments," the statement reads, "have occupied the station of Dunareav, three versts (two miles) west of Cernavoda. We are fighting for the possession of Cernavoda bridge."

Assuming that the reported operations are being conducted west of Cernavoda, it indicates two vitally important things: Gen. Von Mackensen's troops have succeeded in crossing the Danube at Cernavoda, and are now battling with the Russians for possession of that part of the great bridge that spans the marshes on the west bank of the river. If this is true, the battle between the entente forces and Von Mackensen has reached the most critical point of the war.

The fighting between the Russians and the enemy in this sector presupposes the fact that Von Macken-